



Future Leaders of the industry

THIS MONTH WE INTRODUCE 24-YEAR-OLD MARK O'CONNELL, A FOURTH YEAR SPRAY PAINTING APPRENTICE WITH SHEEN PANEL SERVICE IN TOORONGA AND A STUDENT AT KANGAN INSTITUTE'S AUTOMOTIVE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE.



Mark O'Connell.

Mark was born and raised in southeast Melbourne and attended Patterson River Secondary College. He always knew he was destined to work on cars and follow in his father's footsteps as they are both self-confessed 4WD enthusiasts.

After leaving school, Mark found it difficult to get a job in the Frankston area until, through the JobStart initiative, he saw a role at Sheen Panel Service in Malvern. He undertook the pre-apprenticeship program and immediately followed that with a spray-painting apprenticeship at the Kangan Institute. "One of the things that attracted me to the role was Sheen's apprenticeship program and the Sheen-specific classes at the TAFE," he explained.

Mark was inspired by his father as they are forever working on their 4WDs, although when choosing which path to take (auto body repair or refinishing), it was the thrill of seeing the finished product and the look on the customers' faces that got him hooked.

Mark has completed his studies at Kangan Institute's Automotive

Centre of Excellence where he was taught and mentored by Andrew Makroyiannis, who oversees the Automotive Refinishing program at the TAFE. Andrew is no stranger to this column as he has also been instrumental in developing some of our previous Future Leaders.

Michael Mavrikakis, Head Teacher said: "Mark is such sharp, focused young man who really knows what he wants. He is a highly talented technician, has a strong sense of commitment and is always looking to learn. He was a great asset to the Sheen Apprenticeship Program."

Mark cannot speak highly enough of Sheen Panel Service. "The work environment is just awesome, and all the technicians receive strong support and mentoring from the more experienced staff. There is a real closeness at Sheen and a great sense of camaraderie within the team."

Mark already has an eye to the future and has the ambition to one day manage a panel shop or even open his own business, in partnership with a close friend, to

service and repair 4WDs. However, he sees this as down the track as right now he is focussing on being the best he can be. "What I really like about the industry is the way technology drives it forward in many ways. From the way the cars are built, the advancements in coatings and, of course, the electronics in today's vehicles – it's such an exciting industry."

Doug Bell, of Sheen Tooronga, summed it up: "Mark is a great young kid who knows where he wants to go and is heading in the right direction. He is strongly committed to delivering high-quality work and really enjoys his role with us. He is a pleasure to have on the team."

Editor: IAG's ongoing support and sponsorship of these awards is greatly appreciated. With such strong support from within the Sheen Group, Mark is indeed a worthy a Future Leader of the Industry.



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